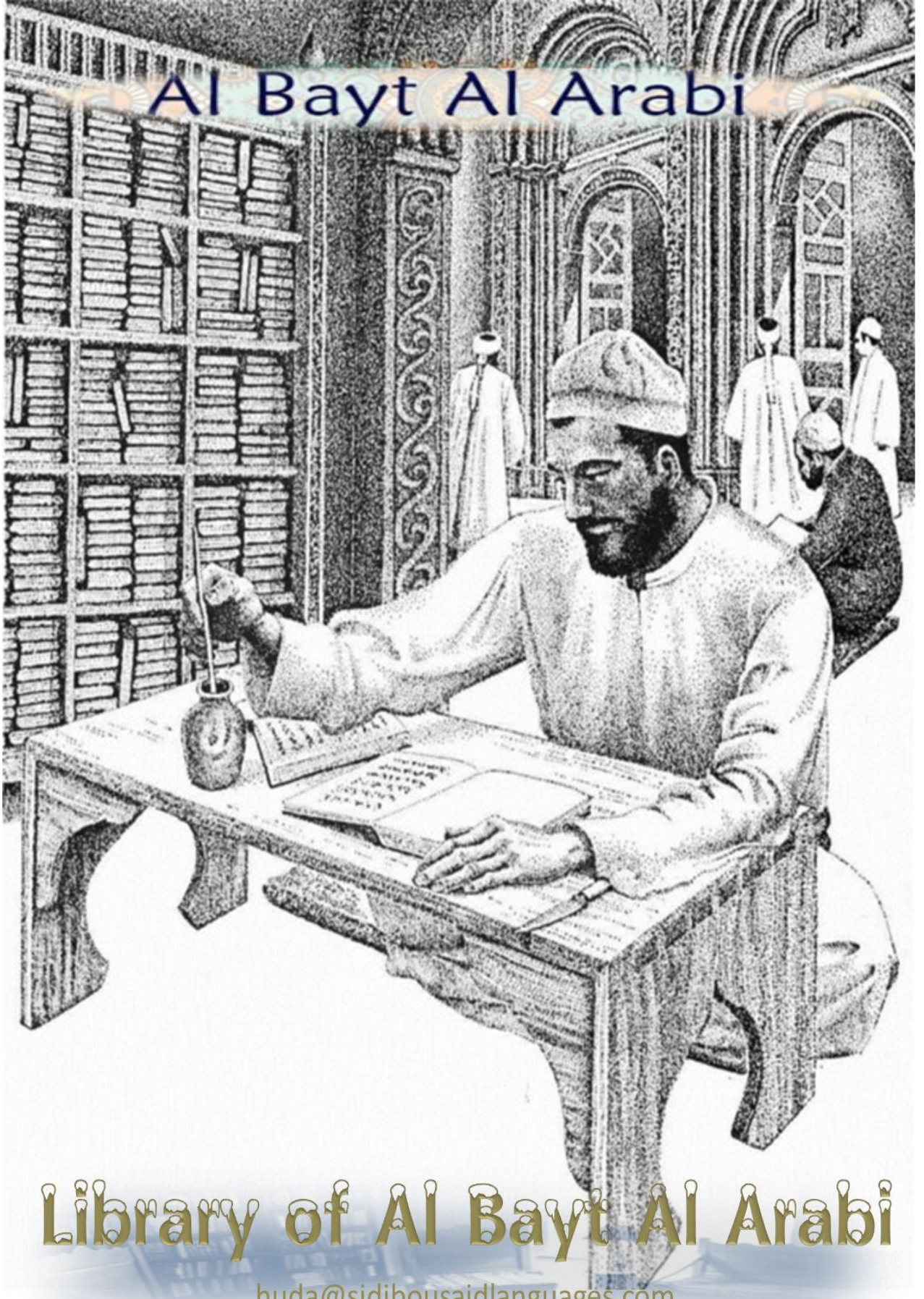

ABOUD SAEED
THE SMARTEST GUY ON FACEBOOK
mikrotext



Library of Al Bayt Al Arabi

huda@sidibousaidlanguages.com

ABOUD SAEED
THE SMARTEST GUY ON FACEBOOK
Status Updates from Syria
a mikrotext

Editor: Nikola Richter
First draft translation: Yusuf Sabeel
Final translation: Sandra Hetzl, Nik Kosmas
Translation of afterword and glossary: Cory Tamler
ePub production/cover design: Andrea Nienhaus
Cover image: Martina Friedl
Cover font: PLT Attention, Viktor Nübel

Nikola Richter, mikrotext, Karl-Kunger-Str. 56, 12435 Berlin
www.mikrotext.de – info@mikrotext.de
ISBN 978-3-944543-09-3

All rights reserved.

© mikrotext 2013

Aboud Saeed

The Smartest Guy on Facebook

Status Updates from Syria

Translated from the Arabic
by Yusuf Sabeel, Sandra Hetzl
and Nik Kosmas

Facebook Profile

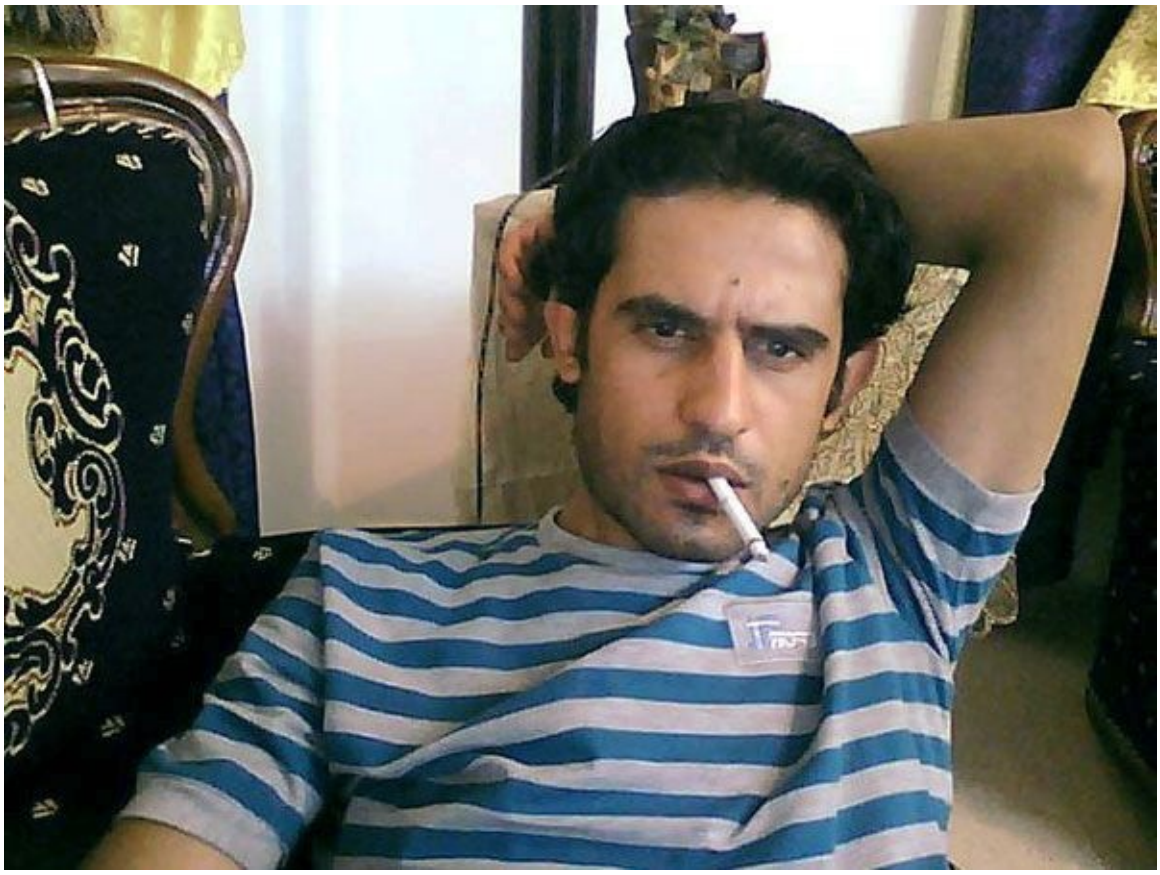
Current City: Aleppo, Syria

Languages: English, Arabic

Sex: Male

Social Status: Single

Political Views: My mother's plastic slippers are more beautiful than any thought and more important than the General Women's Union.



About Aboud: This is Aboud Saeed, conceited and full of himself, who thinks he's more important than Mohammad Al-Maghout, Adonis and Lady Gaga.
I won't accept any friendship requests unless they come with a message that says:
"Please Aboud, I beg you to accept my friend request ... pleeease."
Then I'll think about it.
How many times have we been refused?! How long have we waited for our friend requests to be accepted?!
Now it's their turn to wait for us to decide.
If you receive a friend request from me, please reject it.
I do not read what others write.
I don't like anything for anyone, and whether you give me a like or not is really the last thing I care about. If you think you're doing me a favor giving me some likes then I really don't want them.
I just write and post. Then I pull my mouse from my pocket and say to the reader: You better like this right now!
I never comment on anyone's profile.
I never join any group even if it's Paradise.
I never write "Happy Birthday" on anyone's wall.

I don’t chat with men, but that doesn’t mean that I’ll chat with just any woman or girl.
I don’t care about horoscopes and other Facebook nonsense.
I don’t attend events and I never answer surveys.
I never participate in answering questions.
And I don’t accept any criticism, even the nice kind.

I simply log in and make myself look good.

For in the end, I am the smartest guy on Facebook, like it or not.

Contact information: http://www.facebook.com/aboud.saeed

Favorite Quotes: I’m not the type who quotes other people.

Statuses

December 30, 2011, 12:08 am

I write whatever comes into my head / on the emptiness /
which made me a phantom poet.

34 Likes

December 30, 2011, 1:34 am

I write whatever comes into my head / about the neighbor who borrowed our plate and returned us a different one / and about my angry mother who sent me to her house to tell her: “This is not our plate. Our plate is the one with the green flower on it.“

46 Likes

January 3, 2012, 9:47 am

A stranger sat next to me / and started grumbling: “Ughh, man ... my God ... I feel bad... .”
I pulled out a cigarette and put it in his mouth / took out my lighter and lit it for him / he took a long drag and slowly exhaled / then he looked at me and shouted: “But I have my own lighter ... I have a lighter, don’t you understand?” / I loved him.

42 Likes

January 4, 2012, 12:12 am

Every morning I look in my drawer / for socks that aren’t full of holes / and all I find every time are my mother’s socks / my mother doesn’t wear women’s socks.

57 Likes

January 5, 2012, 1:58am

Dreams burn fat. That’s why I’m so skinny.

52 Likes

January 5, 2012, 2:36am

Blood spilled down my wall / after I added a friend who carried a gun.

49 Likes

January 7, 2012, 2:12pm

“You think you’re Baudelaire?” she says to me.
I ask: “Who’s Baudelaire, a poet? / fuck / history created them, these people / Homs is more important than Troy.
And Abdel Baset Al-Sarout is braver than Guevara.
And I am more important than Baudelaire.”
She laughs. She thinks I’m joking.

65 Likes

January 8, 2012, 2:33pm

If Khalid Bin Waleed is the unsheathed sword of God / then I must be God’s tattered pocket.

55 Likes

January 8, 2012, 7:33pm

For all the elitists
I’m not worth two cents, right?
At weddings, parties, funerals, poetry events, when going out with friends, at sit-ins and protests, in the train, in the street, when I see a girl coming my way, when there’s a debate on Facebook, inside sordid cinema halls, in snack bars on the beach, during family holidays, in prison, in the school yard, in the workshop, when there are many clients,
I’m not worth two cents. That’s why I light my cigarette.

I’m not worth two cents, that’s right: not two cents. Some think I’m an intellectual, that I write poetry, but actually I’ve never picked up pen and paper or read a single line of poetry by Adonis. Until a few months ago, I could not tell the difference between prose poem and verse. I can’t remember buying a newspaper, even once. The number of novels I’ve read could be counted on the fingers of one hand. I don’t know what the capital of Ecuador is or who it was that liberated the slaves in America. I don’t speak a word of English or French, and in Arabic I don’t know where to put the hamza.

I’m not worth two cents. I’ve met many girls, and I slept with all the ones that let me into their beds. In Beirut, I hit on an Asian girl. She was very glad to meet me. In the hospital, when my sister was sick, I

met a nurse and we exchanged numbers. On Facebook, where do I even start … .
There's a woman who comes to my workshop to sell hair clippers. She was explaining her products to me, and all I was thinking about was where we could go together. Even the gypsy girls get their share of my lust. Yet, there's one girl I really like, and I see her every day, and every day, I fail to tell her how I feel.

I'm not worth two cents, nope. Not two cents. Once I took part in a sit-in. But as soon as the cops showed up, I started running. A guy I knew saw me. The next day he said to me: "You really aren't worth two cents, otherwise you wouldn't have been running away like that yesterday."

I am not worth two cents and I'll keep that price.
I am not worth two cents: Halleluja!
I am not worth two cents: Repeat after me.
I am not worth two cents, and that's why I'm happy.
129 Likes

January 9, 2012, 10:20 am
I hate you. Since the day you put satellite dishes on your roof, while on mine there's just an antenna.
42 Likes

January 11, 2012, 1:32pm
I love you / only when you are online.
29 Likes

January 11, 2012, 3:19pm
I ask you for a cigarette / only to show you that I own a lighter.
41 Likes

January 13, 2012, 3:21pm
For me, women are the only alternative to Facebook.
41 Likes

January 14, 2012, 5:49 pm
She said: "I risked my life and crossed thousands of miles to come to you. What have you done?"
I said: "I mentioned you in a status."
33 Likes

January 15, 2012, 2:20am
Coming soon / words with make-up / and lots of silicone / Elissa's tits aren't better than my wall.
38 Likes

January 16, 2012, 7:15pm
Like a driver trying to fix his car, the people ask about freedom: "How much is it gonna cost?"
And like a crappy mechanic, the regime answers: "Well, it looks bad. There's not much we can do about it."
69 Likes

January 17, 2012, 8:03pm
Five in the afternoon. My shift ended at the workshop / I took off my work vest and started running / everybody turned to watch me run /
some started running after me thinking I was heading to Paradise /
children ran after me thinking a plane made an emergency landing somewhere in town / the dogs ran after me. A hundred of them / the security force ran after me, thinking I had escaped from prison / fire engines thinking there was a blaze somewhere / the paramedics / the intellectuals who were at the café / the guy selling candy / traitors, murderers, a thousand of them, killers. All of them behind me.
When I reached home / I looked back at them and said:
"The only thing that happened is my girlfriend came online."
86 Likes

January 18, 2012, 2:03pm
The dictator / does not listen to jazz.
26 Likes

January 19, 2012, 2:07am
In this hostile night / I have six cigarettes and a cellphone with no signal / a bottle of Ksara wine / and 44 people online. Some of them I've used up already, and some of them I don't dare to hit on / and

then there are some that I do not know, or maybe they don't know me / I'm in desperate need of a love story.
I will love the first person that says hi / maybe there will be a blackout before I even get a chance to fall in love.
66 Likes

January 19, 2012, 2:30am
I don't have a résumé.
27 Likes

January 20, 2012, 1:05pm
I want to buy a résumé. Preferably a big one.
27 Likes

January 20, 2012, 7:14pm
Write as if you are playing piano in an empty concert hall.
58 Likes

January 20, 2012, 8:00pm
Life is not as just on Facebook as it is outside / here, there's no mud. Everyone seems clean, elegant and eloquent / but outside, well, me for instance, when I'm on the bus, no girl wants to sit next to me. I don't know why / perhaps because of my worn-out shoes. Or maybe it's my hat. Or maybe there is no reason. Yet, that's justice.
43 Likes

January 20, 2012, 8:34pm
Life is not as just here on Facebook as it is outside. / Here, everyone speaks. Me included / but outside, silence is killing thousands. Yet, that's justice.
44 Likes

January 20, 2012, 10:05pm
Life is not as just here on Facebook as it is outside / here, it's the word that speaks. Here, the girls don't need designer pants, fancy hair styles, new mobile phones, or even silicone. Men don't need a tie, a car, or a shave.
But outside, everything else speaks, except the word / the word is mute, just like me. Yet, that's justice.
62 Likes

January 23, 2012, 6:01pm
I love these red notifications / every time I open Facebook, I want to see thousands of messages that I will not answer. Just to gratify my vanity / I dream of a storm of notifications that will make me wonder where in the world it's all coming from.
49 Likes

January 23, 2012, 6:54pm
I am Aboud Saeed, the asshole, as my girlfriend calls me / because I didn't hang up when she called me by mistake / I didn't know if the phone was in her back or her front pocket / but I heard a rustling sound like jazz music / I kept listening to that tune, danced to it a little, until all her credit was gone.
54 Likes

January 23, 2012, 8:23pm
I am Aboud Saeed the asshole / every time I see a tap, I turn it on /
if I find a bolt, I loosen it / and if I hear the call to prayer, I turn up the music / when my shoes are covered in mud, I look for clean marble / every time I see Shakira's ass, I make fun of my girlfriend's nose / and for every woman that deletes me, I unfriend five men in return.
57 Likes

January 23, 2012, 7:46pm
I am Aboud Saeed the asshole / at my girlfriend's house / I found a book of poetry by Adonis, Songs of Mihyar the Damascene / I started browsing through it. When my girlfriend left to make coffee / I called her little boy in, and gave him a pen / opened the book for him and said: "Scribble, scribble. Write mommy and daddy."
50 Likes

January 23, 2012, 8:22pm
I am Aboud Saeed the asshole / every time I see a film that ends with the hero marrying the pretty girl / or with a kiss, like the film Six Days, Seven Nights / I ask my mom to marry me to my cousin.
54 Likes

January 24, 2012, 07:12pm

To be honest, the guy in my profile pic isn't me / I am a young handsome blond guy, with blue eyes.
I love everyone / and when the news anchor smiles on the screen, I feel like she's smiling at me and I'm convinced she's fallen for me /
I am a handsome, polite young man. The guy who writes "fuck you" here sometimes, it's not really me / I am actually held captive by this wicked person.
I'm a hostage / I'm writing with a gun to my head / and all these smileys are fake, like the smiles of a political prisoner who suddenly appears on Syrian state TV talking about reforms.
143 Likes

February 1, 2012, 12:08pm
We're watching the TV coverage of a UN debate when my mother says, "Are all these papers in front of them supposed to be for Syria?" Of course she means that the situation is clear and there's no need for all that paper.
115 Likes

February 3, 2012, 9:32pm
I spoke to Mom: I'm going go to Beirut, so that I can become a "Syrian worker in Lebanon" again.
She gave me the following advice:
"Don't blow up a balloon just to pop it.
Drink your wine from the bottle, never from the glass.
Never sleep with a woman who gets a pedicure.
Don't be serious when you sleep. Your sleep and your dreams should be like a joke / a joke like the coming war."
64 Likes

February 5, 2012, 1:58am
I am the smartest guy here on Facebook.
38 Likes

February 9, 2012, 1:00am
Facebookish thoughts:
When I think about getting rid of some of my friends, sometimes I hesitate. Here are some examples:
A silly girl who only posts horoscopes, and pictures with hearts / but she's cute.
A girl who supports the regime / but she posts pics of herself in bikinis.
A friend who is driving me crazy with his constant quoting of Mahmoud Darwish / but he always likes my posts.
Friends who don't care about me at all (poets, writers, journalists, artists etc.) / but they're a big deal.
Friends who I have I have nothing in common with, who I have no reason to keep / but I'm forced to keep them, I really have no choice.
For example, once, I deleted my cousin. After that his mom came and she complained to my mom, and then she even stopped talking to us. It almost caused a civil war.
124 Likes

February 12, 2012, 10:17pm
I am an elitist.
31 Likes

February 12, 2012, 10:54pm
Anyone who likes my status is an agent of Israel, Qatar ... and the Ghinwa Bellydance Channel.
63 Likes

February 13, 2012, 7:32pm
I need a love affair
as soon as possible,
within 24 hours
tomorrow is Valentine's Day
an affair, I'll pay if I have to.
71 Likes

February 13, 2012, 8:43pm
Tomorrow I'll google "the most beautiful love story" and then live it.
36 Likes

February 14, 2012, 7:21pm
Yesterday I wrote, I'll google "the most beautiful love story" and then live it.
I guess it's my destiny to live in loneliness.
51 Likes

February 14, 2012, 8:09pm
I am 29 years old / just once I bought myself a pair of shorts / my sister was giving birth to a girl at that time.
My mother started saying, "Your niece was born in the year of the shorts."
45 Likes

February 14, 2012, 8:38pm
I am 29 years old / just once I've been to the cinema / that was when in I was Beirut / to be more specific, I was in the barbers' district / in front of the theater there was a man shouting, "Sex and fucking! Sex and fucking!"
I liked the title, so I went in. It was an Egyptian movie from the 80s where the guy kisses the girl.
34 Likes

February 15, 2012, 8:04
Today
In the cake shop / usually I buy a small slice, a ten-lira slice.
But today there were only big slices, with silly slogans written in thick frosting, which reminded me of the national anthem we sang in school.
58 Likes

February 18, 2012, 6:43pm
For the millionth time, I have a lighter. I don't want anyone else to light my cigarette.
61 Likes

February 20, 2012, 12:30am
I love you / to the last heartbeat, of the battery in my laptop.
81 Likes

February 21, 2012, 8:43pm
Last night when the electricity was out / I was walking around /
I stepped on the ashtray.
I asked my friend: "Did I just click on something?"
My friend said: "It's a carpet not a keyboard."
46 Likes

February 23, 2012, 9:14pm
She says: "I want to see your room and your library."
I say to her: I don't have a library, just a few books scattered around the house. I don't have my own room / everyone in the house says my room is their room / and when we have guests, it becomes the living room.
In my room there is no bed / there is a TV and a heater / my mom usually sits on it / holds her prayer beads and watches the news.
And because she doesn't know how to read, every day she asks me how many people have died.
I'm annoyed by her questions, and some days I just make up a number.
128 Likes

February 24, 2012, 9:54pm
The mint in my tea is more important than the Pokémon on your underwear.
24 Likes

February 25, 2012, 12:03am
I ask everyone to quit writing. Especially those who write better than me.
63 Likes

March 4, 2012, 8:03pm
Dear Facebook, I propose that you change this question: What's on your mind? / who told you that we'll write what's on our minds? /
the things on our minds, we could never write here.
"What's on our minds?" Oh Facebook, you idiot, we write it and then bury it underground / not even the sun can know what's on our minds.
"What's on our minds?" We write it in the darkness, as a google search, and then we delete it before

we shut off our laptops. / “What’s on our minds??!!” Instead of asking “What’s on your mind?” I think you should tell us to: Make yourselves look good, hit on some girls, say some bullshit, bully some people, theorize from your couch, spout nationalist rhetoric, pontificate endlessly, etc.
143 Likes

March 11, 2012, 6:47pm

Like the Syrian regime:
Anyone who doesn’t like me will end up committing suicide.
49 Likes

March 11, 2012, 7:00pm

Like God:
Anyone who doesn’t like me will burn in hell for eternity.
54 Likes

March 12, 2012, 12:03am

Like Syrian state TV:
Anyone who doesn’t like me will soon appear in a video with Ariel Sharon.
30 Likes

March 12, 2012, 2:12am

Like a beggar:
Please love me, I beg you / God bless you / bless your husband / God preserve all your children / love me ... please.
39 Likes

March 15, 2012, 10:09pm

Freedom for those not yet arrested.
132 Like

March 23, 2012, 9:15am

Blue morning without red notifications / morning of disappointment.
39 Likes

March 24, 2012, 4:18pm

Crowds:
I found a dead woman
on my wall
and friends
spontaneously
gathered
around her
55 Likes

March 26, 2012, 2:20pm

Let’s embarrass ourselves / let’s write the things we try to hide, about the things we are afraid of.
Go for it, write what you are hiding under these pretty, clean clothes.
Write about the socks inside your shiny shoes.
Write what’s in your inbox and your sent messages.
My dear lady, tell me about the last big argument you had with your husband.
My brother, tell me how your little boy learned to curse the dictator at home.
Write to me about the last time you took a piss against a wall.
Write everything.
And I will tell you how I’m trying to teach my mother how to smoke.
And how I didn’t wash myself before I prayed with my fundamentalist neighbor who invited me to a dinner at his house.
I was just moving my lips, pretending to read the Fatiha-verse.
I said “Amen,” loudly and full of confidence.
Let this space here be like standing in front of God, on Judgment Day without denial, without forgiveness or repentance, without delay and without remorse.
149 Likes

March 27, 2012, 10:34pm

I wish the heels of her shoes broke.
27 Likes

March 29, 2012, 12:31am
My love, you and the regime / you're oppressing me.
45 Likes

March 29, 2012, 1:38am
I spend most of my time surrounded by the roar of machines, the sound of hammers and the feeling of cold metal. My clothes are torn and smeared with grease and oil. My hands are so calloused and bony that they're not even worthy of touching the shoulder of an old gypsy woman begging for water, or giving a dog something to eat.
I should be writing about things like: "The elegance of the threads of a screw," or, the dilemma of the nail. I could write a novel about holes. Or about how to get rid of callouses. I could write about the cruelty of the nut as it penetrates the bolt. Or sell my shirt to collectors of abstract art.
151 Likes

March 31, 2012, 10:05am
I will update my profile:
—I still don't have a university degree / If I graduated and received a degree, I would not write it on my resume, if I ever even had a resume.
—I don't have a driver's license and I've never driven a car in my life. I've never even played a computer game where you drive a car. When I was a kid, my father didn't give me a toy car … . Instead I played "trains" with my brothers and sisters' shoes.
—I don't know how to take off a bra.
And by the way, my mother is a bedouin, and doesn't wear bras. She also doesn't read or write. But as my friend Ghader Rami says, "She is the most beautiful prose poem on Earth."
—Day by day I consume myself and wait to be annihilated.
151 Likes

April 2, 2012, 9:30pm
I am the whole world / and I am not joking.
29 Likes

April 2, 2012, 9:42pm
The score is still the same; 1 for me and 0 for everyone else.
34 Likes

April 5, 2012, 6:09am
Is the God who created Paris Hilton the same one who created me?
54 Likes

April 8, 2012, 7:14pm
I beg you, when you send me surveys, please spare me, I won't answer any questions. Just this:
—Any questions related to emotions / I don't have any emotions. And like I said before, the beast in me is more beautiful than all your cats and dogs.
—I don't care about future, I don't wanna have children, and I take a certain pleasure in Carole Samaha's body.
— I laugh very little and I've never cried in my life. I didn't go to my father's funeral. Instead I raced imaginary cars made from spools of thread. But on the first day of Ramadan, I finally went to the cemetery. I had a bag full of candy to give away to the other kids, and I remember how I stuffed my own pockets full of candy, before I gave the rest away.
—Regarding my family. We don't look at each other when we speak. When we have a conversation, we act like friends who had a terrible fight and only just recently made up.
—But regarding Syria, the first thing I should ask myself is probably, am I Syrian?
140 Likes

April 23, 2012, 9:42am
Sometimes people I'm friends with on Facebook, poets, writers, and big media personalities, come on television. Then I try to tell my mother, "Look mom, that's my friend! I talk with her every day. We chat and laugh together, and yesterday she even liked my status update."

My mother laughs and says: “Aboud, darling, when will you finally grow up!”
203 Likes

April 29, 2012, 6:10pm
Negotiations are now taking place between my mom and our neighbor, who wants me to add her daughter again on Facebook. I hear my mom explaining in a loud voice to the neighbor, “Please explain to your daughter that my son doesn’t tolerate any pictures of hearts or red roses on his wall.”
142 Likes

May 9, 2012, 2:16am
In my room, there’s a secret tunnel to Qatar.
67 Likes

May 9, 2012, 9:57am
Despite the civil war / this morning I’ll convince my mom that she’s actually a Druze / on another morning, I’ll convince her she’s a Kurd /
then I’ll convince her that we aren’t actually Sunnis.
That our stupid ancestors have tricked us, and that we are actually Alawites / and on a rainy night, I will convince her that we are Jews. I’ll tell her, “Mom, we are God’s chosen people.”
And one day, when I’m giving her another smoking lesson, I’ll tell her to take a deep drag. “Mom, take the smoke deep inside, and then swallow it.” And then I’ll convince her that we’re atheists.
263 Likes

May 9, 2012, 12:25pm
Also, despite the civil war / while my mother and I sit and smoke together, I tell her, “Mom, take a long drag, drag so deep you feel the smoke playing in your heart.”
My mom takes a drag and laughs happily. “Mom, tell me, you want to enter paradise right? Then repeat after me, ‚Fuck the Sunnis and the Shi’ites and the Christians, and the Druze, and the Jews, and the non-believers, and the Muslims … all of them. ‚”
My mom hesitates, looks at me, her eyes all red from the smoke, and she asks me, “But is it OK to say something like that?”
“Sure Mom, of course! Whats wrong with that?”
210 Likes

May 6, 2012, 1:24am
In Manbij, the teenagers google “Israeli sex.” They think that Israeli sex is somehow different. Of course, this is a consequence of the anti-imperialist resistance.
187 Likes

May 7, 2012, 6:29pm
Before I left the house today, my mother saw me carrying a shawl. She asked me, “Who is it for?”
A little embarrassed, I scratched my head. I said, “It’s a gift for my girlfriend.” She didn’t say anything but I could tell she didn’t like it at all. Just before I left she said, “Aboud, make sure you get some presents from her as well.”
162 Likes

May 12, 2012, 7:21pm
My love, right now, I’m so ready to sell you for a tank of propane.
97 Likes

May 13, 2012, 1:47am
My mom sits next to me as I’m creeping through the pics of cute girls I’m friends with on Facebook. Every time I open a sexy picture, she asks me, surprised, “But who is that?!” I tell her, “Mom, don’t worry, she’s a Christian.”
152 Likes

May 13, 2012, 1:49pm
Because of exams, I won’t be on Facebook for a few days. No one cheat on me. No one post stupid pictures on my wall. Don’t write “Free Aboud Saeed!” on my wall. And none of you should dream of claiming that you are the smartest guy on Facebook. No one hit on my girlfriends. Do not post poems on my wall while I’m away and deprive me the pleasure of ignoring them. Keep sending me messages. Write me that you want my phone number. Think about having a relationship with me, because I’ll return “single,” not responsible for any “I love you’s” I’ve ever written here on

Facebook.
231 Likes

May 13, 2012, 12:46am
If I were a painter, I would paint God in court, sitting in a cage. A Senegalese boy would be the prosecutor, bringing charges against Him. And my mother would carry a small wooden gavel. I'd be sitting in the audience and every time I'd make a noise, mother would strike her wooden gavel saying, "Order, order in court!"
199 Likes

May 22, 2012, 6:01pm
Let me say it again, "My mother's plastic slippers are more important than the General Women's Union. More important than Nawal Saadawi's books, more important than Khawla, daughter of Azwar, more important than Shakira's ass, and more important than women who pose nude for some political cause. My mom has never been to Tibet, she's never worn a bikini, and doesn't know how to sit on a toilet. My mother, who blushed and didn't know what to say when my girlfriend asked her, "How do you do, madame?"
My mom wears plastic slippers that are more important than all of the political causes in the universe.
215 Likes

May 22, 2012, 9:09pm
When she gets up; does she drink her coffee from a teacup like me or does she have one of those mugs with funny cartoons on them?
57 Likes

May 22, 2012, 9: 21pm
Is her fridge simply naked and white like ours? Or is it covered in magnets in the shape of fruits and vegetables?
60 Likes

May 26, 2012, 12:01am
That kid who tugs on his mother's dress, crying, and says, "Mom, go home, please, if you don't, my brothers and sisters will die all alone," — that kid is you.
96 Likes

May 27, 2012, 7:21pm
I swear, if I wasn't so afraid of Facebook loneliness, I would delete all my friends, one by one.
82 Likes

May 27, 2012, 06:32am
Yesterday, during the protest, right when I was in the middle of the crowd, the only slogan I could come up with was, "Allahu Akbar … Allahu Super Akbar!!"
82 Likes

May 28, 2012, 3:03pm
Every time they say "armed groups" / a giant laugh erupts out of the cemetery.
247 Likes

May 30, 2012, 11:00pm
My friend at the university / the one who I sent 256 messages / has not answered a single one.
People told me that she says, "Aboud sends me letter bombs."
This is the last message I sent her:
"When you dance / I say, you are a puppet that God controls with an invisible string reaching all the way from heaven."
After that, she blocked me.
111 Likes

May 31, 2012, 1:14am
Confession number one:
Before I fall asleep, when I put my head on my pillow / I fear God.
89 Likes

May 31, 2012, 1:32am
Confession number three:
I am in a relationship with more than 150 women.
64 Likes

June 1, 2012, 2:56am
Confession number 19:

I like it when my mother cries / and I always play her songs that make her cry.
45 Likes

June 2, 2012, 1:18am

Confession number 24:
My mother cried for Hosni Mubarak when the judge said, “The sentence is: life in prison.”
69 Likes

June 4, 2012, 7:54pm

Confession number 32:
I hope that your expensive cellphone breaks.
33 Likes

June 4, 2012, 9:03pm

Confession 35:
To me, “Good morning” sounds like “Unity, Liberty, Socialism.”
85 Likes

June 5, 2012, 2:25pm

This is the first time I’ve brought my laptop to the workshop. Now, all the workers are gathered around me, there are a lot of them and they are driving me crazy. This one wants me to send a tune to his cellphone. Another one points at the picture of Rola El Hussein and says, “Open this photo for me.”
A kid whispers to his friend saying, “This is The Facebook, have you seen it?” And my neighbor asks me, “Aboud, is it true you can say whatever you want about the government here?”
221 Likes

June 7, 2012, 9:32am

I woke up this morning / rubbing my eyes and muttering, “Morning, damn you, damn you for eternity.”
I looked for my mother, couldn’t find her / in front of our house, there is a big rock which my mom usually sits on.
I go there, she’s not there / then I see her in the garden, lifting her dress up over her knees, and tying it in a knot at her waist / she is barefoot holding a shovel / with her leggings full of holes, while the sweat is pouring from her forehead / she is digging next to a pile of books and other things.
Among them I remember: the Quran, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, tapes from Sheikh Imam, her ID, my ID, The Book of Pan-Arabism, a teapot engraved with two crossed swords, and the name of God and the Prophet, my laptop and some other things.
“Mom, what the hell are you doing?”
“I am trying to spare you from a massacre, my son. This stuff has brought us many problems, and sooner or later it will kill us.”
271 Likes

June 12, 2012, 3:43pm

Confession number 41:
I have never seen a woman in a bikini in my life.
91 Likes

June 12, 2012, 4:09pm

Confession 42:
We don’t laugh with each other at home / we always wait for someone to visit and we laugh with them.
171 Likes

June 15, 2012, 9:21pm

When the women from the neighborhood come over for a visit, these days even my mother introduces me as, “My son Aboud, the smartest guy on Facebook.”
175 Likes

June 17, 2012, 2:13pm

Confession number 46:
I’ve only visited Damascus once or twice in my life. In my life I’ve never eaten with a knife and fork, I’ve never driven a car, I can’t swim, and I’ve never been on a train.

I've never flown on a plane and I've never read The Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun. I keep reminding myself to google it, but I always forget.
I've never seen an iPad, and as for animals, insects and birds, I only know flies and ants and maybe some cheesy birds and the dog in the street where my brother Mohammed Saeed lives.
One time in my life, I prayed in a mosque. That was when I was still in elementary school. It was very hot that day.
In the past one and half years, I've prayed a few times, but only in the dark. I never watch any of the YouTube videos my friends send me or post on my wall.
For years I've claimed to listen to jazz, but actually I only know Louis Armstrong. I've never read Love in the Time of Cholera, and I've never caressed the cheek of a woman, except for my sisters and cousins. Not once in my life have I written anything on a piece of paper. I've never had a secret crush. And I've never been friends with a cleric, a policeman or a proper gentleman.
At home, I don't have my own dresser.
I have a drawer where I put my few books, my socks, my underwear, and a black lighter that Nour Khwais gave me as a gift, a few DVDs and some other stuff that isn't worth mentioning.
178 Likes

June 20, 2012, 12:14pm
I'm working in the metal shop / my laptop's sitting in the corner.
There's a kid called Ibrahim, who I work with, sitting in front of it.
I said to him, "Ibrahim, every time you see a red dot, tell me."
Now Ibrahim is sitting there and every minute he's screaming, "You got a like from so-and-so or comment from such and such."
And when he says, "Aboud, a like from Rola El Hussein!" all the workers drop what they're doing and run to the laptop.
149 Likes

June 23, 2012, 11:25am
I am Ibrahim, the kid who works with Aboud.
I too am an intellectual like him
And a dissident like him
I don't like death
I don't like humiliation
But I love Dima Bayaa.
186 Likes

June 23, 2012, 12:03pm
Currently I am Aboud.
48 Likes

June 23, 2012, 3:32pm
I wonder, is there less death on Twitter?
124 Likes

June 28, 2012, 5:01 pm
Confession number 51:
I'll keep writing until the first tank passes our house.
112 Likes

June 28, 2012, 5:10pm
Confession number 52:
Ibrahim is real / I am the illusion.
52 Likes

June 29, 2012, 5:52am
My mom burst into my room without knocking. At home we don't knock, actually there's only one room. A room which I call mine /
which my mom calls hers, and the guests say is ours. And when my big brother is mad he shouts, "All of you out of my room!"

So my mom bursts in / tissues are flying everwhere / dripping with sperm and fear.
The ashtray is so full, there's no room for another cigarette.
Hassan Blasim's book Madman of Freedom Square.
Heavy Metal at its finest: Devil Doll.
"Aboud, why aren't you sleeping?"
Come on mom, come sit next to me and have a cigarette, smoke.
My mom squats next to me. Takes a cigarette and puts it between her lips. I light it.
I have no idea where she got it from but she always taps my hand with her finger when I'm done lighting her cigarette.
Smoke, Mom, smoke. Spit your inner fire like a dragon. Smoke.
Mom, don't you think this Eva Rose is seriously the most beautiful pornstar ever?
Mom, I jerked off three times in a row.
Mom, this video, it's of a kid who they took and then tortured. Then they burned his body and threw him on the street.
Mom, when I try to love her, it hurts.
Mom, I want to go to Damascus when there are a million tanks on the streets.
Mom, should I pour you a glass of vodka?
My mother is finishing her cigarette with incredible speed.
Mom, Paul Shaool says, "Hot lips burn cigarettes before the match has a chance to light them."
Mom, I want to be with the dead and the killed.
And buy a cat.
And I want a resume.
A big one, mom. A big resume.
I want to marry Salma Masri.
And I want an ambulance to take us home from the cemetery.
My mom lights another cigarette.
Mom, Paul Shaool says, "Even the smoke is a departure."
Mom, today my girlfriend gave me a present.
She was wearing blue jeans.
Mom, I didn't give her anything, just like you told me.
I told her, "I will give you my tongue."
Mom
"Come on Aboud, go wash your hands and face, go buy some bread, it's already 7 in the morning."
245 Likes

June 30, 2012, 2:56pm
I am Ibrahim. And these likes that I give, here and there, do not necessarily express the opinion of my boss Aboud.
76 Likes

July 1, 2012, 12:30pm
I am Ibrahim. My boss Aboud is asleep right now.
My boss Aboud believes that sleep is more beautiful than death and love.
99 Likes

July 3, 2012, 7:16pm
I sent Salma Masri a friend request and a poke.
58 Likes

July 10, 2012, 1:46am
One day we'll leap out of the screen / as winners.
73 Likes

July 15, 2012, 3:26am
The more friends there are;
The bigger the loneliness becomes.

156 Likes

July 28, 2012, 10:53pm

In the past, I would open my chat window, and of the friends with a green dot, I would choose the most beautiful girl.
I would write her right away, without any greeting,
“I love you.”
Nowadays I can’t do that anymore. Because death could come at any moment, and swallow me up. Just imagine you’re in the middle of writing “I love you” and then a bomb drops on your head! That would be a catastrophe.
Death wouldn’t be the catastrophe / death is, as we used to say here,
a fart.
The catastrophe would be if a love story ended like that.
178 Likes

July 29, 2012, 12:42am

In case I’m blown up with my laptop, someone living abroad will keep on managing my profile.
Nothing will change.
My profile picture will stay the same / with the mole and the cigarette.
The friends will stay / but the number will vary.
The lovers: We will continue as long as there are keys on the keyboard.
The poets: To hell with your Facebook walls! Wall by wall.
Death: Delete a friend, but add another who has been waiting for months.
The revolution: It stood up and the Facebookers took its place.
121 Likes

July 31, 2012, 10:03 am

“How’s it going? Do you still have problems over there?”
“That’s not problems, that’s a revolution.”
147 Likes

July 31, 2012, 4:19pm

All our lives they’ve criticized us because we didn’t pray and we didn’t fast. Today they’re annoyed about our beards and the expression “Allahu Akbar!”
Jesus Christ!
90 Likes

August 3, 2012, 3:45am

All that stuff they write in the media and on Facebook about the revolution isn’t worth a cent.
Most likely Aleppo and the surrounding area will be destroyed and we will be driven out and crushed, we will learn the art of horror, jumping running and cursing.
Every one of us will become a living encyclopedia of horror, fear, and brutality. If they don’t die first.
At this point, it’s ridiculous to be singing songs and adoring a city. They said, “Hide under the stairs, or in the toilet, or in the bunker.”
Then a missile came along and blew up the stairs, everything under them, the toilet and the bunker.
Then they said, “Allahu Akbar! It’s a miracle, everything’s been destroyed, except the word Allah which is still written on the wall.”
Then a friendly bullet came flying along, and blew God and the wall away.
It is required:
That you are a predator, and not a monster.
That you choose the most beautiful way to die.
But before that, first you have to:
Stuff one half of your foot in the mouth of Haitham Maleh, and stuff the other half in the face of everyone who’s still asking you to be a peaceful-pacifist-peacipacifist … ah, what do I know.
216 Likes

August 5, 2012, 11:03am

I wish she knew / how important I am on Facebook.

87 Likes

August 5, 2012, 1:46 pm

At demonstrations when I'm shouting in the middle of huge crowds of people, "Freedom forever! Like it or not, Assad!"
I suddenly take out my mobile phone / check it, put it back in my pocket and say, "I wish she would call."
103 Likes

August 6, 2012, 1:10am

She changed her profile picture / without bothering to answer my pending friend request.
80 Likes

August 9, 2012, 1:31pm

My boss Aboud wants me to stand outside under the blazing sun,
so that I can let him know when fighter jets are coming
while he is chilling in the workshop, a cigarette in his mouth, and right now he's saying to a customer, "Fast, pray and include the rebels in your prayers."
93 Likes

August 11, 2012, 1:51pm

In front of our house there is a handsome terrorist.
98 Likes

August 11, 2012, 10:49pm

The massacre passed by quietly.
76 Likes

August 16, 2012, 7:03pm

Last night, my older brother became my friend on Facebook.
Of course he sent me a friend request first, and I accepted it without any bickering, no begging, I didn't even put him on a waiting list.
I had no choice.
That's why I beg you all not to make any drama in front of my brother, and to refrain from publicly flirting with me on my wall in the future.
From now on I will think about everything I post very carefully.
And I will like the stuff my brother posts, whatever it is.
Every status, every pic, every comment that he posts will get a like.
Even for his anger, he will get likes.
Note: My brother is right now scrolling through my profile, and he thinks that names like: Alma Intabli, Louise Abdulkareem, Islam Abushakir, May Skaf and Rim Banna are only nicknames, not actually connected to the real people. He simply doesn't want to believe that these people could be my friends. "Give me a break, how can that be, when could that've happened? How do you get get in touch, in Manbij, with someone like, for example ... May Skaf?!"
138 Likes

August 22, 2012, 8:20pm

Make the news ticker bigger / our TV is too small.
128 Likes

August 23, 2012, 5:05pm

After the airstrikes my number of girlfriends has risen to 278.
70 Likes

August 25, 2012, 1:21pm

As my beautiful neighbor pours water on the earth in front of her house, I smoke on the balcony.
I smoke to give her the impression that I'm very busy, and not at all alone. I smoke so that I can ash in front of her feet. I smoke to curse the dictator with every drag. I smoke so that the smoke gets in my eyes and they start to tear up, which makes my mom think I'm crying for my fallen friends. I smoke to make a huge cloud so that it looks, to the civilized world, as if our house is burning, so that they send some firemen and rescue teams. I smoke so that my mom doesn't get a break from smoking.
202 Likes

August 25, 2012, 10:43pm

Every time she asks me, "Do you love me?"

I tell her, “My mother is sitting next to me.”
101 Likes

August 18, 2012, 9:26pm
Sometimes I think about creating a Facebook account for my mom.
But I hesitate; I’m afraid that her spirit might be corrupted.
Or that maybe even she would learn to pontificate and grow ideals.
So I tell myself she should stay as she is, a free spirit. She should keep saying whatever comes to her mind, without censorship, without anyone coming and correcting her spelling and grammar mistakes.
She should stay as she is: She can’t distinguish between Shi’a and communism, and she doesn’t really need to know that there is lipstick that costs more than a thousand lira.
181 Likes

September 19, 2012, 12:01pm
All I care about right now / is annoying my neighbor
with revolutionary songs.
105 Likes

September 19, 2012, 12:21pm
Tank cough.
73 Likes

September 22, 2012, 3:08pm
Facebook asks, “What’s on your mind?”
Okay. Let me be clear with you for once.
Now I’ll tell you my story, you idiot.
I had a lot of brothers and sisters, and we all slept in the same room.
I wore an Argentinian national team jersey.
The blue stripes on it were completely bleached out, it had become as white as snow.
My father was beating my mother. I used to be so happy in those days.
My girlfriend married a man with the intelligence of a cow.
And my brother sold his pants to get tickets for a musical starring Fairouz.
And I don’t even have an apple.
And every day the dictator bombs us / and we bleat back at him.
I don’t have dreams, not even sad ones.
My only wish is that modern technology finally reaches my neighbor’s house, so I can have sex with her on Facebook.
I hate Mahmoud Darwish, and I love Handala,
and I’ve always wished that he would turn around to us.
When I smoke Marlboros, I curse the poor and I kick beggars.
And when I finish the pack, I say, “Boycott American goods!”
I bite my nails, and I cheat on my girlfriend at least once a day.
I’m thinking about making an online suicide attack,
I’ll strap on an explosive belt and gather all my online friends together in a single status ... and then blow myself up.
261 Likes

September 25, 2012, 3:09pm
I am the biggest blacksmith in the industrial area.
88 Likes

September 25, 2012, 6:41pm
Confession 55:
I am lonely here. Everything around me is lonely too / my mother and I share our loneliness equally.
93 Likes

September 25, 2012, 9:42 pm
Confession 56:

The only word I haven't been able to explain so far to my mom is: lol.
123 Likes

September 26, 2012, 7:26pm

Confession 60:
I know you are here right now, in this very moment /
I can feel your presence here between the profile pics of my friends /
on the left side of the screen / hidden.
Or maybe you're the one who is chatting with me right now, under a fake name? I can smell the smell of your sweat, that you're sweating because of me.
105 Likes

September 29, 2012, 3:40pm

I am Ibrahim / my boss Aboud isn't here right now /
he took his motorcycle for a ride.
When my boss is on his motorcycle he unbuttons his shirt and hits the gas like he's Batman.
My boss thinks that when he's on his bike, all his Facebook friends can see him.
177 Likes

October 3, 2012, 11:25am

Right after I open my eyes in the morning, I switch on the TV.
I see the death toll. I see devastation and destruction. I see Zahra, the little girl, as she's crying in the rubble: "I want water."
I reach my hand towards the screen to wipe her tears away. I see the shell cases. (They say they're made of pure, expensive copper.) I look for them on the screen. I'm thinking about collecting them and selling them for some cigarettes and weed. I see the blood flowing. I stick out my tongue and start to lick the screen. I see the corpses of the executed with their hands tied behind their backs. I reach out my hands to them and try to untie the ropes, and take the blindfolds from their eyes. To let them loose, because maybe no one can free us from this goddamn regime, except for the dead. Because the dead, as opposed to us still living, have nothing to lose. And sometimes, I see the anchorwoman, and then I get naked. And before anything can happen, I hear shouts coming from the screen, "Takbir!" Then I quickly put my clothes back on and repeat a few times, "Allahu Akbar ... Allahu Akbar ... Allahu Akbar."
197 Likes

October 4, 2012, 11:17pm

A long time ago, when I was in elementary school, I hated school.
I was constantly skipping classes and my parents didn't know.
And whenever the day of the exams came close, I wished that a miracle would happen. That class would be cancelled because the teacher is sick, or that the exam would be postponed, or that maybe the school would explode. And now I'm looking, full of guilty pleasure, at all the blown-up schools.
149 Likes

October 5, 2012, 2:22pm

Facebook is getting on my nerves. And I'm thinking about calling Azrael, the angel of death to come to me, to pull my soul out of this screen.
What does it mean if you have friends of all colors, with many pictures, and electronic souls, while in reality you're not even able to spend half an hour with a flesh-and-blood human.
Only a few meters away from here, right in front of the house, dogs are chewing on garbage bags. Marginalized, cowardly and innocent dogs. Just like me. I'm thinking, why aren't there any dogs on Facebook? For example, Dog A likes the status of Doggy B, Dog C is in a relationship with Doggy D, even though she isn't in the dog friend list. Of course the dogs don't share their space equally. There are big dogs and small dogs, and the big dog doesn't give the small dog any likes, even if the small dog has very sharp teeth.
Life has gotten boring over here despite all the love, the flirting and the human virtue.
But there's one thing I have to admit I like here. That here on Facebook there is no cemetery.

Now I could make a gang (for example, with members who are the same religion as me) and then we would go on the profiles of the poor and miserable, and do it like the inhabitants of Montmartres, at the fish market, when they devoured the body of Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, “piece by piece, out of love and superstition.”
I will go on the profile of my beautiful Facebook friend, owner of the biggest digital tits, and devour her, until she becomes nothing, just dust and confetti.
Now, as I’m slowly dying, I want to leave a little testament to my digital friends:
I’ve been deceiving you all along, I’ve actually just realized that I’d sell you for a pack of cigarettes, and my mother for a good night’s sleep, and my homeland for my mother, and myself for a tiny moment of victory, like when you throw a stone at a cat and she runs away.
I’ve been deceiving you. Whenever there was a blackout, I laughed myself to death about you.
Take my profile and do whatever you want with it.
Turn it into an insane asylum. A ruin. A motel … . The main thing is, don’t let any dogs in.
256 Likes

October 22, 2012, 11:53pm
Maybe some of you are wondering why I haven’t posted anything lately, and maybe won’t post anything soon either.
The reason is that I’m very busy at the moment, writing things to post in the future.
I will write everything down and save it, so that after I die, this profile can keep existing.
Ibrahim will continue, and there’s a back-up character in case something happens to Ibrahim.
There will be enough posts for Ibrahim for the next three years.
Takbir!
165 Likes

October 28, 2012, 7:57pm
The drama around my handle, “the smartest guy on Facebook,” has even reached Future-TV. Which made the beautiful, short-haired anchorwoman Sheimaa Oubri say, “What the hell does that mean? On what grounds is he the ‚smartest guy on Facebook?’”
I can only repeat myself. I’ve lost a lot friends because of this claim. Each time I write “I’m the smartest guy on Facebook,” I lose five friends. And I keep going, no matter what it costs me, even if, at the end, I’m all alone here, mumbling to myself, from time to time I’ll shout into the void, “I’m the smartest guy on Facebook! I’m the smartest guy on Facebook! I’m the smartest guy on Facebook!”
125 Likes

October 31, 2012, 5:45pm
I am Ibrahim and I miss you all.
There is a stupid and ignorant young guy here. He is 31 years old, he works in the shop across from us, and in the industrial area he is known as, “The Sensor.” The Sensor is tall, doesn’t read or write, doesn’t lie, and isn’t interested in the news. Up till now he hasn’t heard anything about Hurricane Sandy, and he eats four meals a day. He loves films by Murad Alamdar and action movies. He dreams of a golden pistol, like the one Nicholas Cage has in Face Off. The Sensor didn’t get his name because he’s so sensitive, on the contrary he’s rather emotionless. Actually though he has a nice voice and he likes to sing. But he doesn’t like the sound of his own voice, and he hates it when people record him. Just like Bukowski, who once said, “When I hear recordings of me reading my poems, it sounds to me like a lion in the zoo roaring in pain.”
The Sensor got his name because he repairs electronics, and when he does he constantly removes the sensors and safety features so that the stuff works like a donkey, until it finally breaks down.
One day The Sensor came to my boss Aboud all excited, and he said, “I saw you! I saw you on Future-TV! And they were saying you’re the smartest guy in the world! And there was a woman, she didn’t like it... and … .”
The Sensor was really excited and he kept cursing that woman, and my boss Aboud was offering him

cigarettes and kept saying, “Ah really... and then? Tell me more”
162 Likes

November 6, 2012, 12:35pm

A democratic dialogue between a loyalist and a dissident in Manbij:
“You fundamentalist Muslim brother! How can you call what you’re demanding ‚freedom’!?”
“Me? A fundamentalist? My friend, when I was getting wasted drinking Arak, where were you?”
166 Likes

November 12, 2012, 5:12am

Old disorders and complexes II
You sneak out of school, towards the gardens and the ruins, and start looking for a gecko. A gecko is a member of the of the reptile class, similar to a crocodile, but as small as a finger, and incredibly fast, though it is still possible to catch one. But be careful! We want it alive, like we want the dictator alive.
You put it in a jar and close it tight. It has to be totally airtight. And it should be sealed in without food or water. And whenever you get the feeling it’s about to die, open the lid a little bit and let it have some air. You don’t do it out of sympathy, you do it so that the suffering can last even longer. Let him die without a single scratch, let him die without him shedding a drop of blood, let him die the same way we are dying.
And when it’s done, take the gecko by its tail, pour some water on it and then drag the body through salt, then put it out under the blazing sun. This is the way to make a beautiful little souvenir.
Out of defiance against the school principle’s expensive Lacoste shirt, pin this beautiful gecko on your shirt and go to class. Go to the principle and tell her, “This is the gecko that will devour the stupid crocodile on your breast.”
124 Likes

November 13, 2012, 9:24pm

The problem, my dear Rim, is that your Facebook wall is locked. Not that there is anything wrong with that. All famous people have their walls locked.
I will tag you here anyways. Who knows, perhaps it will somehow make it onto your wall.
Like a Free Syrian Army fighter dodging a sniper’s bullet, I will make a hole in all the walls of all our mutual friends. I will break holes in them and slip through them one by one, wall by wall, until I reach the top of your wall, where all your friends are. And since they’re all together in your friends list, I’ll only have to fire one bullet and then I’ll declare your wall liberated.
109 Likes

November 16, 2012, 10:41am

It is clear we are a greedy people. We want peace, freedom, justice and equality. Even more ridiculously, we want the killing to stop!!
Never mind that our profiles are covered with weapons! Women, men, children, the old, the news anchor, Ziad Rahbani, and even the profiles of the human rights organizations, they’re all armed. Everyone sleeps with a gun under their picture. And there are security checkpoints everywhere on Facebook. Everyone has an explosive belt strapped on...
Right now there is an online demonstration. “We are are all Al-Nusra Front. Takbir!”
At the same time, there’s a survey, “What color jeans are you wearing right now?”
“Brown.”
Takbiiiiiiiir!
148 Likes

November 20, 2012, 3:01am

Honestly
I wasn’t in the bathroom
There were no guests
I was not on the phone
My mom didn’t call me in

My little brother wasn't crying
There was no bombing
The electricity never went out
The Internet was not disconnected
And I was not eating dinner
I was cheating on you.
142 Likes

November 20, 2012, 3:36am
She asks me on Facebook, "Do you love me?"
Me: "I love you."
She says to me in all seriousness, "Prove it."
I go on her profile and like every status, without even reading them.
119 Likes

November 20, 2012, 4:47am
My mom asks me about a status I wrote,
"What did you write there?"
"An online demonstration."
My mom laughs and laughs … .
My mom who usually spends her days crying /
Is rolling on the floor laughing.
138 Likes

November 20, 2012, 5:09am
After a long evening on Facebook with my mom
She complains to me, "All the neighbors are making tomato paste except for us."
"What's with you, Mom? We were discussing technocracy and other important stuff."
200 Likes

November 21, 2012, 6:20pm
My girlfriend says, "The revolution is amazing and cool …
I just wish it was in China or on television."
90 Likes

November 21, 2012, 10:21pm
Fuck life when day starts with, "Get up, get up, a fighter jet!"
108 Likes

November 24, 2012, 4:20pm
"How is life at your end?"
"It's like, uh, freedom and bombing raids."
101 Likes

November 25, 2012, 2:45am
On the phone / just as she was about to tell me what she was wearing / the airplane dropped its bomb.
103 Likes

November 25, 2012, 4:21am
She says, "Be romantic and tell me about yourself."
I am Aboud Saeed who has 312 other girlfriends besides you.
I live in an Islamic Caliphate, since the day a kid in the city of Daraa wrote "Down with the regime" on a wall.
When I was a kid I stole a chicken and cut its throat with a shard of glass I found in the trash. Then I collected firewood and nylon bags and started to roast it / I roasted it with its feathers.
Once my friends and I skipped religion class. We were smoking outside, and like Renato in the film Malina, we took our dicks out and measured them.
"How many centimeters?"
We lied. Adding and rigging the numbers like women lie about their age.
At the university I liked a girl who always wore plastic bracelets. She liked Tamer Hosny. She had freckles all over her chest. She filled her lecture notes with things like, "Fuck you all … Fuck off."

And sometimes she would draw a smiley face on her fingertip.

I remember a sentence Karim Sami wrote in his novel Mr. Bahr's Room: "The daydreams of a young woman are more beautiful than the best poems of great writers."
Her constant bitchiness never stopped me from visiting her page every day. And sometimes I get irrational and I wish that a no-fly zone would be established over my city.
Just so that she would have to flee to here.
I am Aboud Saeed who has 312 other girlfriends.
I listen to Iraqi music and it makes me cry even though I'm convinced that my heart is made of stone.
I love the poetry of Samer Abu Hawash and Emad Abu Saleh.
I've read, The Spices of Love and the Knowledge of Fucking by Imam Al-Suyuti. Even after that, I still watch porn.
My favorite genre is outdoor porn. What intrigues me the most about it is the people who pass by and the cars that drive by in the background, who just seem to ignore the naked people, as if the only reason they were naked was because they were waiting in line for Judgment Day.
I am Aboud Saeed who lives in the Islamic Caliphate — according to you anyways.
My love, I have no idea how to be romantic.
If you really force me, I could tell you,
"I see your face every day,
In a new piece of metal."
Or,
"The sound of the hammer,
sounds like your voice."
Or,
"The sparks that fly from the welding machine are as hot as your tits."
... and so on.
162 Likes

December 3, 2012, 2:04pm
I am Ibrahim. The days of my boss Aboud are numbered /
Down with the tyrant.
93 Likes

December 6, 2012, 9:17am
I wish she knew that it was her cigarette /
That made me teach my mother how to smoke.
103 Likes

December 6, 2012, 10:47pm
I want her so bad that sometimes I think,
I wish she'd get stopped at an Al-Nusra Front checkpoint.
110 Likes

December 8, 2012, 11:21am
We are all traitors on Facebook in an interesting and beautiful way.
Why all this ugly and fake loyalty in reality?
104 Likes

December 10, 2012, 1:29pm
I smoke Marlboro / my mother asks, irritated, "That's expensive, no?"
110 Likes

December 10, 2012, 10:48pm
I used to think she was here because of me
Whenever the rectangle on the top left side of the screen tells me,
"She likes someone's link," or "She commented on a status."
... I light a cigarette and curse Ibrahim.
110 Likes

December 15, 2012, 4:32am

And so we recently discovered that revolutions are only possible in countries where there is already a certain degree of democracy, and where certain freedoms are respected. Revolutions can only work against heads of state who respect their people, at least a little bit.
114 Likes

December 16, 2012, 11:15pm

Since the beginning of the glorious Syrian revolution I have been struggling to pronounce the name of the news channel France24:
France Dan Kat
Francan Kan
France Dan Khat.
…
I'm still trying … .
142 Likes

January 1, 2013, 9:02am

I will marry So'aad and abandon Facebook.
So'aad who just sent me a text message saying,
"Yassir, call me on the landline. It's me So'aad."
157 Likes

January 2, 2013, 11:18am

Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar.
Fuck history and all the candles wasted for it. Fuck New Year's, which my friend Fadi spent in Long Beach, California.
Fuck the holiday greetings I receive. And fuck Yassir, this dog that So'aad loves.
Fuck the committee that selects the Man of the Year and left me out.
Fuck everything that I wrote last year except Salma Masri's phone number.
Fuck Fairouz, her music and the songs of the good ol' days. Fuck Mijana, Dal'ouna and Abu Zilt.
Fuck the morning coffee / poverty / the black gas tank, the yellow one, and Lakhdar Brahimi.
Fuck the theorists of utopia, fuck the political forecasters and the predictions of Michel Hayek and Leila Abdel Latif.
Fuck structuralism, post-structuralism, the vertical reading of prose poems and Kana and its sisters.
Fuck the death of the author and contemporary criticism.
Fuck reforms and policy shifts, and fuck all the checkpoints that ask for ID.
Fuck the statuses of my friend Hala Hala, and fuck every like she gets for them.
Fuck the profile of Lukman Derky and the last status he wrote.
Fuck your walls,
wall by wall.
Fuck Scarlett Johansson's lips and all the lipstick she's used.
Fuck Manaf Tlass's cigars and the smoke that burns from them.
Fuck tranquility, peace and calm, and fuck the most the peaceful place in Syria.
Fuck this life, which has become uglier than death and colder than a freezer.
Fuck, Fuck, Fuck.
*Inspired by a text from the writer Ali Al-Sudani
169 Likes

January 3, 2013, 10:02am

Last night my brother, who is one of tough guys in town and doesn't read or write, wanted to meet the commander of a rebel brigade, a certain Sheikh Something.
He asked the guard to call the Sheikh.
The guard answered, in classical Arabic, "I regret to inform you but at the present moment the Sheikh is indisposed and unavailable to meet with you."
My brother said, "Indisposed and unavailable to meet with me? Dude, I fuck this classical Arabic!"
163 Likes

January 3, 2013, 1:19pm

A friend recently asked me, “How can you write the word ‚fuck’ on your wall?”
My friend, if you can’t write fuck on your wall how can you even begin to talk about overthrowing the regime.

141 Likes

January 3, 2013, 1:19pm

A dissident friend, who I’m really close to, who lives abroad asks me,
“What do you need, can I send you anything?”
“No thanks, I’m fine. Just keep giving me likes.”

171 Likes

January 10, 2013, 4:43pm

The neighborhood women gather at my mother’s house and talk about Facebook.
My mom asks one of them,
“Your son, how many likes does he get in a day?”
“Hmm, I guess it could be about 30 … 35 and the most it could be is probably 50.”
My mother, taking one long drag of her cigarette, says,
“My son gets over 150 likes a day.”

205 Likes

January 13, 2013, 6:12pm

My mom eats bread with oranges.

97 Likes

January 14, 2013, 12:17pm

I am a big writer, So’aad / I hide my face with a black nylon.
I write and publish my texts on free pages on the internet.
I pull my mouse out of my pocket and press it against the readers’ throats and say, “Now read it!”

159 Likes

January 15, 2013, 7:49pm

“Where is your house, Aboud?”
“Right behind the Ahrar al-Sham Brigade.”

106 Likes

January 16, 2013, 12:32pm

Worse than the massacre, is this silly online sadness.

165 Likes

January 19, 2013, 1:18pm

Weak, defeated morning / like a woman who cannot leave the house without drawing on her eyebrows.

110 Likes

January 19, 2013, 1:48pm

Rough morning / like the lips of a girl who uses a ten-lira lipstick.

91 Likes

January 19, 2013, 1:55pm

Morning full of blackheads and pimples / like the face of a girl who buys her powder from the village stall.

62 Likes

January 19, 2013, 2:01pm

Falling morning / like the eyelashes of a girl who buys her mascara from a guy selling counterfeit crap.

51 Likes

January 19, 2013, 2:10pm

A hard and spikey morning / like the bra of a girl who buys her bras by the kilo.

40 Likes

January 19, 2013, 2:42pm

Complexed and insecure morning / like a girl who walks and never looks back / not even if a bomb goes off behind her.

39 Likes

January 20, 2013, 1:04pm

I have a desire to vomit up all the words in my stomach at once
Every nightmare I’ve ever had

Every film I've ever watched
Every book
Every woman
All the cigarettes I've ever smoked
With a single breath I'll spew them out like a drunken dragon
And get back to my life
My life, which has become a dumpster
Darkness and metal cold
Cans of sardines
Cigarette butts
Used menstrual pads
Bullets
And a murderer
84 Likes

January 23, 2013, 4:23pm
I will burst a bag of chips / to spite the Al-Nusra Front.
115 Likes

January 24, 2013, 5:44pm
Before, I used to open the chat window and choose the prettiest girl online and tell her,
"I love you."
But now, my mother opens the same chat window and chooses a girl according to her mood and sends her mean icons,
Like the one with its tongue sticking out, or the other one with the open mouth like a hungry worm, or the pink one that's supposed to look like Satan.
My mom doesn't read or write, but with these faces, she can also tell what's good and bad. And that's why she's never clicked a smiley, a flower, or a heart.
154 Likes

January 26, 2013, 06:50pm
Just as the plane was about strike,
I looked at Adonis, full of pride, and confidently told him, "I didn't just come running out of a mosque."
164 Likes

January 27, 2013, 9:25pm
I imagine myself as a big Facebook dictator
And that one day, I will fall, like every tyrant must fall.
I imagine the scene after my downfall will go like this:
Huge crowds, my friends, storming my profile and looting it.
This one carries one of my posts on his shoulder and runs away with it.
That one takes my girlfriends hostage.
Others gather all my writings and pile them up in the street, like bales of hay and grass and then burn them with the cheapest lighter.
My name and profile picture will be dragged through the streets
like they did with Saddam's statue in Iraq.
One of my friends, most likely a poet, will go up and down the street in jubilation
Carrying my pic in one hand, and beating it with a shoe
All the while, my girlfriend, clueless
will hold a press conference saying, "We surrounded them
and slaughtered them, these infidel puppets of colonialism."
170 Likes

January 28, 2013, 10:51am
Our street is narrow

But we don’t know each other
116 Likes

January 29, 2013, 2:20am

To all those who are still wondering who Aboud Saeed is:
I am Aboud Saeed, living in Manbij, where girls don’t go to cafés and where the tallest building is four stories high.
Every time I ask my little nephew to say, “Allahu Akbar”
He answers, “Shame on you.”
In school I always sat in the back of the class.
I went to university because I wanted to meet a girl without a headscarf who had a mobile with Bluetooth.
She called her mobile Catwoman
So I called mine Meeow
Still she did not care
I work as a smith, which means the hammer, the bolt and adjustable wrenches.
I sleep in one room with my seven brothers and sisters.
I don’t have my own dresser
So, I hide my secret letters in the chicken coop
Sometimes a hen lays an egg on the sentence, “I love you”
And a few times it happened that they took a shit on “goodbye.”
My mother doesn’t know how to cook lasagna, and until last year she thought a croissant was a fancy dish that you eat with a fork and knife
Every night I dream I am Hannibal Lecter
With the brain of the girl I love lying on the table in front of me
On the bus I always sit across from my neighbor, to watch her and I’ve never seen an airplane except for fighter jets.
I steal electricity from the nearest pole, and my internet is paid for by an upper-class girl.
The kids in my neighborhood tease me about the mole on my forehead,
and my older brother doesn’t believe me when I tell him I’m a poet.
While my cousins, if they knew, would make me the laughingstock of the town.
I have a pencil that I scribble with sometimes, and I sharpen it with a knife.
The last blue, expensive pen I had was a present
and it burst in my shirt pocket.
At weddings, I always sit near the singer, at funeral services, I am the person who serves the bitter coffee, and in cafés, my table is the one the waiter always ignores.
I am Aboud Saeed, I caress the neck of the beast inside me
so that it may grow
like a blind wolf
402 Likes

Afterword

"When the MiG jets begin again their daily work and the bombs fall again around me … I put on my headphones and listen to a song I like at full volume … and then I read your posts … and smile." Rami Traboulsi on Aboud Saeed's Facebook wall, October 1, 2012

As I write this text, I still have not encountered Aboud Saeed in flesh and blood. Although it's true that his digital life is an important element of his analog universe, I'd prefer not to say that I know him personally—and he would certainly be hurt. We talk on the phone now and then, Skype, and chat on Facebook.

Although neither of the two would ever claim to be honest, there is a lot that the Aboud Saeed who is an author on Facebook and the 30-year-old man who works as a blacksmith in Manbij, a town near Aleppo, have in common. Aboud Saeed's life (sharing a roof with his mother, with his metalwork, with irritating bus rides, war, virtual flirtation, TV, and power outages) serves as inspiration for his writing. He actually works almost every day in the workshop and also posts multiple times daily on Facebook, which has become his small window into the wide world. He plays with this contrast. Time and again he points it out, reminding himself and his readers that, despite all of his Facebook popularity, he is still just a metalworker from Manbij: a foolish guy with delusions of grandeur and lots of dreams from which his mother is always hauling him back into harsh reality. And sometimes he exaggerates this contrast, says he'll sleep with seven siblings in one room (probably true at one point, but today, at least, there are fewer siblings). Neither do I quite believe him when he writes that he hides his love letters in the chicken coop, if he even has one.

He says of himself, "When I started on Facebook, I was a marginalized user with a forlorn wall. No one 'liked' me, and the friend requests I sent were mostly ignored. But then I decided to start a revolution and I began to read…" He wanted to confront this cyberworld that stood in such stark contrast to his own impoverished, provincial reality. At some point he wrote on his wall, as a provocation to everyone: "I am the smartest guy on Facebook." He meant this sentence, not as irony, not as a joke, but rather as the declaration of his personal uprising on Facebook. After this first post he started writing daily. Later, when he repeated this sentence, he was referencing the beginning of his personal revolution. Since that day he has not sent a single friend request. When I asked him if his personal revolution coincided with the uprising in Syria, he said, vaguely, that it must have indeed happened around the time that the Syrian revolution began.

His Facebook status updates consist of a mixture of literary documentation of his reality (but surely not for purposes of documentation!) into which fiction then creeps, together with mental field trips, aphorisms, and language games that don't fit into either category.

Before it was possible to make this e-book, I'd translated about a dozen of Aboud Saeed's Facebook statuses, read them publicly, and told quite a few friends about them. I wanted to show that there were people in Syria like him: free spirits. I consider this the most important part of my work as a translator: to recognize a thing that I find beautiful or important; to go into the world in which this thing is invisible and, there, to make it visible to others. My relationship with Syria is of a personal nature. The majority of my friends are Syrian. In 2006 and 2007, I lived in Damascus for a few months, and since then I have occupied myself a great deal with the country. When the revolts began in 2011, it was natural for me to introduce myself into the situation as much as I could, mostly as a megaphone.

A great deal of literature has accrued in the Syrian Facebook sphere over the past two years. Fares Albahra, Lukman Derky, Raed Wahsh, and Mosab Al Nomairy are prominent examples of this. These are in part authors who (in contrast to Aboud Saeed) had already published poetry collections "before Facebook," but now increasingly use Facebook as a platform. Before 2011, nobody took someone writing on Facebook particularly seriously. Today, even internationally established Syrian authors like Zakaria Tamer, whose books have been translated into many languages and are available in every

bookstore in the Arab world, use it to disseminate their texts. There are a number of reasons for this.

For one thing, the country's upheavals due to the national uprising have rallied everyone around social networks (no matter where they stand politically). The government does not tolerate any international or independent press (as problematic as these terms may be) in the country. To uncover the uprising and document the injured, the dead, and the protests, people in Syria organize themselves primarily through Facebook sites. Citizen journalism has become unbelievably important. It's the only opportunity for people to inform themselves about what's going on in the country. Syrians in Syria and abroad want to connect; everyone wants to understand what's happening at home. A large part of Syrian life is shifting to Facebook. Anyone who lives outside of the country and wants to converse with friends in the country; anyone who wants to compare opinions, exchange information, or gather together, they do it on Facebook. Because of the precarious safety situation, Facebook has become the social meeting point almost everywhere in the country. Even people who live in the same area of the city can be separated from one another by multiple military checkpoints. You can imagine, then, how likely it is that people are still able to gather for conversation in cafes.

That The smartest guy on Facebook is being published as an e-book is, naturally, a good conceptual fit. Aboud Saeed's texts play with and within the electronic sphere. Always, they contain the stiffness of the shimmering, luminous screen; they leap time and again from the flat neatness and digitality of the world within the laptop to the dusty streets of Manbij, the town in the province of Aleppo where he lives.

For this e-book I've copied status updates that Aboud Saeed posted to his wall between December 2011 and February 2013 directly from his Facebook profile and translated them. They appear here in chronological order—that is, in an exact reversal of the order they were in where they first appeared—as one continuous text running from yesterday to today. To retain something of the Facebook atmosphere, I've carried over the date, time and number of "likes" for each post. Under the original posts on Facebook there is naturally always a long comment thread from other Facebook users to read. Aboud Saeed takes part in the discussions, too, but I have left them out for clarity's sake.

Literature in the form of Facebook posts often bumps up against its limits. Texts can't be too long; also, it's only with difficulty that the dimension of time in the texts can be manipulated. Mostly, short pieces of literature on Facebook feel a lot like diary entries, aphorisms, or poems. Aboud Saeed has interwoven his Facebook writing completely with Facebook itself; he has developed a thorough theory of Facebook writing. For him, Facebook isn't just a platform, it's a constant subject of his writing, indeed the site of the action; and this sets him apart from many other similar writers.

In Ibrahim, his young apprentice, he even manages to introduce a character that posts on his Facebook profile in his name when the master blacksmith Aboud Saeed is momentarily absent, always with the introduction: "I am Ibrahim…"

That his Facebook texts are appearing now for the first time outside of the Arab world through mikrotext, a new independent digital publishing house in Berlin, in digital form, is of course crazy. And for the author it all seems abstract and far away. After the publication of the German-language edition he had approximately a thousand new friend requests from German and Arab-German Facebook users. In an interview for the Arabic online magazine 24.ae, he said: "I've gotten very fond of Germans. They're lovely, crazy people." Before, he reached an exclusively Arab audience, and primarily over Facebook in Syria and Lebanon (with the exception of two publications in Arabic-language online magazines). Now he's being read by a readership that it's difficult for him to assess.

The need for information on Syria isn't restricted to the West. Aboud Saeed speaks for an entire generation from his soul and is therefore also a relevant new author in Arabic. The social statement that the book makes is also important. In every Arab country there is a wide gap between urban and rural, and there are few, if any, voices coming from the geographic and social province—even fewer

that are so self-confident and cool.

Personally, I hope that at some point there will at last be peace again in Syria, so that I can shift my own life back out of this virtual space. But who knows? Maybe there's no coming back from the digital world.

Sandra Hetzl, September 2013

Glossary

Names and terms are constantly popping up in Aboud Saeed's status updates of which we can't necessarily assume that English-speaking readers will be aware. However, so as not to disturb the flow of reading, we have decided to eschew footnotes in favor of a glossary with selected terms, ordered thematically as follows: currency, names of Syrian places, players in the current conflict, Arab literary and intellectual scene, Arabic language and writing culture, Muslim practices and Islam, and celebrities of Arab show business. The glossary was assembled by Sandra Hetzl.

Currency:

Lira, currency in Syria; also known as the Syrian pound. As of the end of September 2013, the exchange rate was 128 Lira for one Dollar. If you wanted to say, in Syrian dialect, that someone or something is good-for-nothing, that is, worthless, you would say, literally, "He costs two francs." This expression, which Aboud Saeed uses in the original Arabic text, originates from the French Mandate (1920–1946).

Syrian Place Names:

Homs, third-largest city in Syria, is located pretty much exactly in the center of the country. Due to extreme protest activity there, the city has been under military siege by the regime since February 2012; it consists now in large part only of rubble and ashes. The inhabitants of Homs are still subject daily to heavy bombing from the regime.

Daraa, city in the south of Syria, the starting point for the country's major popular uprising. In late February 2011, a 12-year-old child wrote "The people want to topple the regime" on a school wall there, whereupon the entire class was arrested. All attempts of the parents to convince the local authorities to free the children failed. The children were tortured. The first major demonstration in Daraa, on March 18, 2011, was in response to these events. Security forces shot four demonstrators on the first day. Within two days, the death count rose to 100. Other cities organized solidarity protests for the citizens of Daraa and the affair spread like wildfire throughout the country.

Players in the Current Conflict:

Abdel Baset Al-Sarout, Syrian football star, one-time goalkeeper for the Syrian national team. Became one of the most important leaders of the demonstrations in Homs, primarily because he has a beautiful singing voice. He is so beloved nationally that he is able to lead demonstrations in other cities over Skype. Has survived four attempted assassinations from the regime.

Free Syrian Army, largest armed opposition structure in Syria, formation announced in a July 2011 video. Composed on the one hand of deserters from the Syrian Army, and on the other of voluntary fighters.

Ahrar al-Sham, an Islamist and Salafist rebel brigade formed in late 2011 that fights on the side of the Free Syrian Army for the fall of the Assad regime. Appears to be striving for an Islamic state for the future.

Al-Nusra Front, a jihadi rebel group, allied with Al-Qaeda and formed in 2012, that uses military force to oppose the Assad regime, but strives for a global Islamic Caliphate. Many of the fighters are not Syrian and the majority of the opposition watches the group with skepticism; many groups of the Free Syrian Army keep their distance from it. The only group that practices suicide bombings in residential areas. It is feared that the Al-Nusra Front is trying to insert itself into civilian life as well and to sow hate between the different denominations.

Haitham Maleh (b. 1931), oppositionist, Democrat, human rights activist, and critic of the current regime. Opposes any form of dialogue with the regime.

Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN Special Envoy to Syria since August 2012.

Manaf Tlass, son of Mustafa Tlass, former Syrian Defense Minister and closest confidant to Hafiz Al-Assad, with whose son, later President Bashar al-Assad, Manaf Tlass first became acquainted as a boy. Promoted in 2000 to officer of the Republican Guard, he later served directly under Mahir Al-Assad, the President's brother, in the rank of Brigadier General. According to media reports, placed under house arrest in May 2011 because he was said to have refused to bomb civilian residential areas. In summer 2012 he was able to flee through Turkey to Paris. Because of his past and his close friendship with Bashar al-Assad, there are strong reservations towards him in opposition circles.

Arab Literary and Intellectual Scene:

Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), Islamic historian, considered one of the founding fathers of sociology. The Muqaddimah (Arab.: Introduction), on which he worked for his entire life, is Khaldun's masterwork. It comprises 1,475 pages.

Al-Suyuti (1445–1505), Egyptian Islamic scholar, lawyer and writer.

Adonis (b. 1930), major contemporary Arabic poet. The Syrian intellectual is considered left-leaning, rebellious and progressive. Has expressed from the beginning, however, skepticism regarding the new protest movement in Syria. His reservations are primarily rooted in his belief that the protest movement has a religious Islamic color.

Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008), major Palestinian poet. His work is translated in many languages worldwide. He is known by practically everyone in the Arab world.

Nawal El Saadawi (b. 1931), feminist Egyptian author, physicist and psychiatrist. Has written numerous books concerning the situation of woman in Islam and opposes, in particular, genital mutilation.

Handala, famous character created by Palestinian cartoonist Nadschi Al-Ali (1938–1987), who criticized the Israeli policy of occupation with his comics. Handala is a barefoot little boy always seen from behind, standing, his gaze directed at whatever is happening.

Hassan Blasim (b. 1973), Iraqi author and director.

Paul Shaool, Lebanese poet.

Arab Language and Writing Culture:

Hamza, symbol in Arabic script, placed either over or under a letter.

Kana and his sisters, grammatical term for a group of verbs that follow the same grammatical rules. "Kana" is the verb "to be."

Muslim Practices and Islam:

"Takbir!," a call, usually directed by a single person at a group, which responds with "Allahu Akbar."

"Allahu Akbar." literally: "God is greater," the beginning of the prayer (appearing in the call to prayer, the obligatory prayers, and the supererogatory prayers), used frequently and in various contexts in the vernacular. Can mean as much as "God will be the judge," but also: "Oh God, oh God!" or "Good heavens!" In the context of the conflict in Syria this exclamation is sometimes one of despair in extreme situations, for example under fire or bombing, as if, in these moments of panic and shock, to call on a higher power in whose hand Fate lies. Historically, was also used as a battle cry for encouragement during battle.

Sura Al-Fatiha, so-called opening sura (chapter), the first chapter of the Quran and an integral part of every prayer. Very common, also read at every funeral and inscribed on gravestones.

Khawla, daughter of Azwar (b. ca. 700), lived in the time of the Prophet Mohammad, led various battles as a warrior.

Khalid Bin Waleed (b. 584), also called "the Drawn Sword of God," was one of the companions of the Prophet Mohammad and a notable commander during the Islamic conquests.

Druze, a religious minority represented in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine.

Alawites, a religious minority primarily represented in Syria, to which Bashar Al-Assad belongs, along with a large part of the highest-ranking representatives in the secret service and military.

Celebrities of Arab Showbiz:

Carole Samaha (b. 1972), Lebanese pop-singer and actress.

Salma Masri (b. 1948), Syrian television and stage actress. Aboud Saeed says of her that she was the first woman who set his hormones in motion.

Fairouz (b. 1935), Lebanese singer, has performed in many musicals and plays. An iconic figure in the Arab world.

May Skaf, well-known Syrian actress. One of the few people in the Syrian cultural elite who has spoken out openly against the brutality of the regime. Has participated in protests; has been detained. Friends with Aboud Saeed on Facebook.

Louise Abdulkareem (b. 1976), Syrian actress, one of Aboud Saeed's Facebook friends.

Elissa (b. 1972), Lebanese pop-singer.

Rim Banna (b. 1966), Palestinian singer. Has found considerable success in Europe as well with her modern interpretations of traditional Palestinian songs. One of Aboud Saeed's Facebook friends.

Michel Hayek (b. 1967), called the "Nostradamus of the Middle East," a celebrity television prophet. Makes a long list of vague prophesies concerning the political state of the region on the Lebanese channel LBC on New Year's Eve, and has also predicted Lady Gaga's future.

Leila Abdel Latif, the female counterpart to Michel Hayek; on New Year's Eve, predicts the future of the region and the world on LBC.

Tamer Hosny (b. 1977), Egyptian singer, actor and composer.

About Aboud Saeed

Aboud Saeed was born in 1983 and lives in the township of Manbij, in the province of Aleppo in northern Syria. Manbij was heavily bombed by the current provincial government in 2012 and early 2013. Aboud Saeed lives with his mother and seven siblings in one room in a small house. After the ninth grade, he left school, and trained to be a smith and welder. For the past 11 years, he's worked in a workshop. For three years he was a foreign worker in a plastic factory in Lebanon, where he lived in a tin shack. In 2008, he received a high school equivalency diploma, and enrolled in a university to study economics. The university is currently closed due to the political situation. In 2009 Saeed created a Facebook account and posted there every day. The Smartest Guy on Facebook, a selection of his status updates, in which he writes about his mother, smoking, Facebook, love, and daily life during the violent Syrian conflict, is his first book. The Lebanese newspaper Annahar wrote of him in late December 2012, "Going on Facebook without getting to know Aboud Saeed is like traveling to Paris without seeing the Eiffel Tower."

About the Translators

Sandra Hetzl was born in 1980 in Munich and lives in Berlin. She studied Visual Culture Studies at the University of the Arts (UdK) and works as a documentary filmmaker and translator from the Arabic.

Nik Kosmas was born in 1985 in Minneapolis (USA). He lives and works in Berlin as an artist, consultant and personal trainer.

Yusuf Sabeel was born in the Manbaj of Somalia and grew up in California. He studied Comparative Literature at Columbia University. Over the past two years he has been traveling and working in North Africa, Europe and The Middle East. He currently lives in Rabat.

About mikrotext

mikrotext is a digital publisher for short digital reading, founded in 2013 in Berlin. Every three months, we publish two independent ebooks that are thematically linked. We focus on new literary texts that comment on contemporary questions and allow insights into tomorrow. The texts are inspired by discussions on social media platforms and reflect today's global debates. All texts are published in German, but selected titles will be made available in English.

Subscribe to our **newsletter**: www.tinyurl.com/mikronews.

Follow us on Facebook or Twitter @mkrtxt.

More mikrotexts

Have a look at our English and German publishing program!

English titles

Chloe Zeegen: *I love myself ok? A Berlin Trilogy*. October 2013, ca. 80 pages on a smartphone, ISBN 978-3-944543-07-9.

German titles

Aboud Saeed: *The Smartest Guy on Facebook. Status Updates from Syria.* Translated from the Arabic by Sandra Hetzl. March 2013, ca. 250 pages on a smartphone, ISBN 978-3-944543-02-4.

Alexander Kluge: *The Equivalent of an Oasis. Essay for the Digital Generation.* March 2013, ca. 50 pages on a smartphone, ISBN 978-3-944543-01-7.

Franzobel: *Steak for Everybody. The New Meat Tourism.* June 2013, ca. 60 pages on a smartphone, ISBN 978-3-944543-03-1.

Jan Kuhlbrodt: *The Magpie Experiment. Seven Days of Genesis.* June 2013, ca. 220 pages on a smartphone, ISBN 978-3-944543-04-8.

Thomas Palzer: *Spam Poetry. Sex by Industries for All.* July 2013, ca. 80 pages on a smartphone, ISBN 978-3-944543-05-5.

Moritz Rinke, Claudia Roth et al.: *Gezi Stays. Solidarity with the Changes in Turkey*. August 2013, ca. 200 pages on a smartphone, ISBN 978-3-944543-06-2.

Sarah Khan: *The Horror Mushroom. A Mystery of Unsatisfaction.* October 2013, ca. 200 pages on a smartphone, ISBN 978-3-944543-08-6.

Table of Contents

Imprint
Title Page
Facebook Profile
Statuses
Afterword
Glossary
About Aboud Saeed
About the Translators
About the Publisher
Backlist